



IMCOM *Safety* Gram

Sustaining, Supporting, and Defending Safety Excellence



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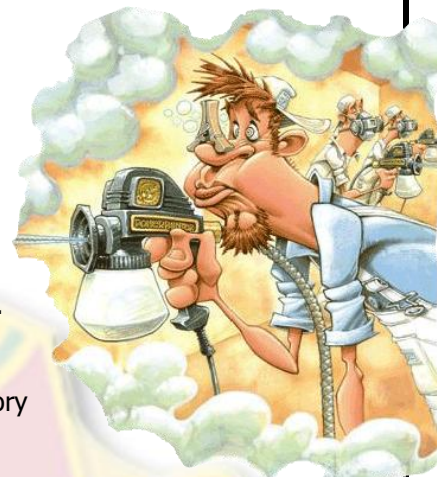
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Protect Yourself from Inhalation Hazards

You might be surprised to find out that many routine jobs that we do expose us to possible inhalation hazards and may require respiratory protection. For example, if you weld stainless steel indoors then you need respiratory protection. If you weld equipment coated with CARC paint then you probably need to wear a compressed gas respirator.

The best way to protect a worker from inhalation of hazardous chemicals or other materials is to eliminate the hazard by using a less hazardous substance. In cases where the use of hazardous chemicals cannot be avoided, engineering controls such as ventilation of the work area is the next best method for reducing the hazard. If the inhalation hazard cannot be reduced by substitution or engineering controls then respiratory protection is required. When you are required to wear any type of respirator (even a dust mask) then you are also required to be enrolled in a respiratory protection program.



The key elements of the base Respiratory Protection Program are:

- ◆ **Workplace Evaluation:** An Industrial Hygienist will survey each work area to determine the need for respiratory protection. Technical manuals also provide general respiratory protection requirements when working with certain chemicals and hazardous materials.
- ◆ **Respirator Selection:** A respirator and filter or cartridge is selected that will provide protection from the specific hazard present in the workplace. In some cases, a respirator with a clean air supply may be required.
- ◆ **Training of all Participants:** All respirator users are trained in how to properly use and maintain their respirators.
- ◆ **Medical Evaluation of all Participants:** A Physician or Health Professional will evaluate each respirator user for fitness to wear a respirator.
- ◆ **Fit Testing:** Each respirator user must be fit tested to ensure a leak free seal with each type of respirator he or she will use. A good seal requires a clean shaven face.

Remember:

- ◆ Respirators are used as the last line of defense when inhalation hazards cannot be eliminated or reduced by substitution or engineering controls.
- ◆ In order to wear a respirator (even a dust mask) you must be medically qualified, trained to use and maintain the respirator, and be fit-tested for the respirator.

Make sure you understand the hazards of any chemical you may be exposed to. Know the respiratory hazards associated with your job and follow all safety precautions to the letter, to protect yourself and others.

